

Lorna Byrne on Christmas for The Irish Daily Mail

I love Christmas! I see angels all the time, and have seen them every day since I was a baby. I see them physically just as I would see you if you were standing in front of me, and if there is no-one around I talk to them and listen to them in the same way as I would communicate with you. The angels have been my friends, companions and teachers all of my life. As a young child I thought there was nothing strange in this, that everyone saw angels. But as I got a little older I learnt that this was not the case. The angels told me to keep quiet about what I was seeing and hearing. I never talked about it until I wrote my first book *Angels in my hair* in 2008 – I didn't even tell my family what I was seeing.

I see angels every day but at Christmas time I see many more angels than at other times of the year- millions of angels come to join us for the celebrations that happen across many religions and traditions at this time. Christmas angels look completely different to other angels I see.

The first Christmas I saw them was the Christmas I was four. I wanted a tricycle more than I wanted anything in the world. I asked the angels was there any way my parents could get it for me. My parents were very poor. We lived in a ramshackle cottage, near the Guinness Brewery in Dublin and my Da ran a bike shop out of the lean too beside the house. Because money was so short, I never told my parents I wanted a trike, but all summer I had been pestering the angels, asking them if they could they arrange it. As Christmas came closer I used to peer into da's bike shop, just in case the angels had managed to help my da to get an old one and paint it, but there was never a trike there.

I kept asking the angels about it, but they never responded. So I reconciled myself to not having a trike but then on Christmas morning there was a big present for me wrapped in brown paper. There was a beautiful angel standing over it glowing brightly – it looked at me with a big smile and spoke to me without words saying "Lorna your trike." I ran straight for it, almost falling in the process, and ripped the paper off. Inside was this little red trike. I was thrilled, and immediately sat on it and started cycling around the small little living room. I had never cycled a trike before, but it seemed to come naturally. Da took me outside where I could cycle up and down on the pavement. I was over the moon, I was so proud of it – I knew it was an old one, and that da had repaired it and painted it, but that didn't diminish my joy in any way. I never found out how my mum and da knew I wanted a trike, but the angels got the message across somehow. I took it with me everywhere for several years, and da kept repairing it. Finally it fell asunder.

It's still the best Christmas present I ever got.

In the days before that Christmas I was going home, along a road in Old Kilmainham in Dublin near my home and I saw two angels that was very different to any angels I had seen previously. I asked the angels with me who they were? The angels told me they were special angels for Christmas. As I got older I learnt more about them. Now I know that they also belong to other

spiritual festivals that happen around this time of the year in other parts of the world. Perhaps they should really be called the December angels, but I still call them Christmas angels.

These Christmas angels look completely different to other angels I see. It's hard to describe but it's as if these angels are denser, broader, their feet closer to the ground. They are also not as bright as the other angels I see. It's as if they don't show me their full brightness. They wear a something like a very beautiful cloak to dim their light. The cloak is dark in colour but has bright gold threads woven or platted through it, and their internal light seems to shine through these golden threads. They also move differently to other angels. I occasionally see angels falling from Heaven, as if tumbling down. But I see these angels coming down slowly as if they are walking down a mountain.

They don't seem to interact with us or with other angels. I have never seen them turn and talk to a Guardian angel, for example. They come and walk among us at this time in a solemn way, and they reach out and touch people in the centre of the chest or sometimes at the same height from the back. They are touching our souls.

These Christmas angels come to help us to understand that we are more than flesh and blood, that we have a soul. They come at this time to touch our souls, to enhance that connection that we all have – regardless of religion, or lack of it, with God.

I only see them around Christmas time. I've seen many of them already this year. I was in New York last week sitting in a restaurant and through the window I could see a Christmas angel stepping down between the skyscrapers. They will stay on earth between now and Christmas and the number of them will continue to build until it reaches a peak around Christmas day. Then in the New Year they will disappear, again. I will see some walking back towards heaven and then will not see them again until the following Christmas.

A couple of Christmases ago I was in town when the angels told me I must go to a particular cafe. I obeyed, as I always do, walking through the town past a few cafes, asking which one I was to go into. Then I saw an angel standing at a street corner, gesturing and telling me to hurry up. Around the corner I saw another angel standing outside a cafe.

So I pushed the door open and I saw a woman of about sixty sitting at a table in the corner. She was on her own, but there were two angels sitting with her mimicking her drinking tea. Suddenly the light of her Guardian Angel opened up. He was enormous, and had a male appearance. He was draped in clothes of gold and purple and I could faintly see his wings. It looked as if each wing was an enormous and beautiful white feather. Her Guardian Angel embraced her showing enormous love and compassion for her.

The two angels at the table told me to sit at the table next to her and engage her in conversation. I sat down, taking off my coat and gloves, turning to the woman to comment on how cold it was. The two angels glowed even more brightly. They had such smiles on their faces and the one nearest to the woman touched her hand very gently. She woman smiled at me and we started to talk. Meanwhile I watched the angels whispering in her ear every now and then.

She started telling me about something that was causing her great concern and anxiety. She told me about her neighbour and friend, Maeve, an elderly lady of whom she was very fond. She said Maeve lived on her own and, although she had children and grandchildren as well as other family, none of them ever came to see her. Even at Christmas they never rang or even sent a letter or card. The woman told me that each time she visited, Maeve would cry about how much she missed her family. Over the years she had become very frail and seemed to have given up on life because she was so lonely.

It was beautiful to see how concerned this woman was about the sadness of her friend Maeve, and I was glad to watch the angels trying to console her. I told the woman I would pray for her friend and I would ask God to send his angels to help, so that family would come to visit this Christmas. She reached out and took my hand saying, it would be great if God would do that.

She also told me that deep in her heart she believed that this would be Maeve's last Christmas.

I said goodbye to her and left the cafe. I knew that the angels would have already been trying to get the family to visit, but obviously they weren't listening. As I walked Archangel Michael appeared beside me and took my hand. He said "Lorna, you must pray every day, so your prayers will be strong enough to persuade Maeve's family to listen to the angels."

I prayed every day. Three days before Christmas I went to Blanchardstown shopping centre, on the outskirts of Dublin with my daughter. It was very crowded. I watched the angels with everyone. Then an angel appeared beside me and whispered in my ear, telling me I needed to go into a particular shop. I walked towards it and as I did so, the woman from the cafe came rushing up to me. She was almost breathless with excitement. She was beaming with a smile of such happiness and the same two angels that I had seen with her in the cafe were there with her still, but now glowing brightly and full of joy. She blurted out her news. "Maeve's family are coming to her for Christmas!" She explained excitedly that Maeve's daughter had rung Maeve and said she and her children wanted to celebrate Christmas with her. Apparently she had asked if Maeve would mind if they celebrated it in Maeve's house. They would bring everything needed for dinner and cook it. They would even come over on Christmas Eve to put up a Christmas tree and decorations.

The woman glowed as she told me that Maeve's daughter had told her that she loved her and missed her.

The woman asked me to thank God and his angels for making this happen for her friend. "It's the best Christmas present I could have received. I want nothing else for Christmas!"

I tried to contain my happiness as we said our goodbyes. I felt like jumping for joy. It was such wonderful news to hear.

Every Christmas angels are working to bring families together, to make sure that people are not left alone or lonely. They need our help, though. So please listen and make that phone call, or send that card or invite that person in. Don't let anyone around you be lonely this Christmas.

At Christmas I see angels flying over houses and dropping balls of light onto them. There would be an explosion of light that would fill every nook and cranny, lighting up the brickwork and the cement in between.

I used to wonder what it meant. What were they doing? I am always learning. Over the years I have come to understand that these angels are helping us adults - to connect with their memories of Heaven, the spiritual feelings of love and hope children carry inside so easily. An instinct that there is more to life than material things – that love and friendship are more important than anything else.

If we feel prompted to invite someone round we know is on his or her own or prompted to give a gift – it really doesn't matter what in material terms – then that may well be the influence of the angels who are around us all the time – but especially at Christmas.

International bestselling author Lorna Byrne is author of Angels in my Hair and her new book Stairways to Heaven is out now. More information at www.lornabyrne.com

© Lorna Byrne.